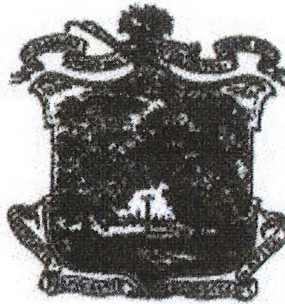


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## ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Arlington, Massachusetts  
Middlesex, ss

DOCKET NO. 3633

DECISION  
Special Permit Under  
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: 1500 Mass Ave, LLC  
Property Address: 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

Hearing Dates: September 14, October 19, and November 2, 2020  
Date of Decision: November 2, 2020

20 Day Appeal Period Ends: December 3, 2020

Members  
Approved

Rachel J. Zimber  
[Signature]  
David M. Wat  
Eugene B. Benson  
Katrin L. A.

Opposed

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Town Clerk's Certification

Date



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**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
Department of Planning & Community Development  
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

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**DECISION OF THE BOARD**

**Environmental Design Review Docket #3633**  
**1500 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476**

**November 2, 2020**

This Decision applies to the application by 1500 Mass Ave, LLC, to construct a new mixed-use building with four (4) residential units and two (2) commercial office units at 1500 Massachusetts Avenue within the B1 Neighborhood Business District. The Board reviewed and approved an Environmental Design Review Special Permit in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review.

A public hearing was held on September 14, October 19, and November 2, 2020. The public hearing was closed on November 2, 2020, and the new building approved by a vote of 5-0.

**Materials reviewed for this Decision:**

- Application for EDR Special Permit, including dimensional and parking information, building and site plans, existing site conditions, proposed landscaping, photographs, impact statement, building elevation and renderings, LEED checklist, and signage details, dated August 20, 2020;
- Updated Environmental Design Review narrative, dated October 13, 2020, and revised October 27, 2020;
- Updated Statement of Intent, dated October 13, 2020, and revised dated October 27, 2020
- Updated Dimensional Charts, dated October 13, 2020, and revised dated October 27, 2020; and
- Updated Plan Set and Presentation Boards, dated October 9, 2020, and revised October 27, 2020, from MFDS A+P.



**The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.3.3, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:**

1. Mixed-use is allowed by Special Permit in the B1 Neighborhood Office District. The Zoning Bylaw, in Section 5.5.1 A, indicates that mixed-use buildings without retail space are allowed in the district.
2. The Master Plan recommends supporting commercial areas by encouraging new mixed-use redevelopment, including residential and commercial uses, in and near commercial corridors. This new development is in close proximity to the Arlington Heights commercial district, and businesses along Massachusetts Avenue. The corridor is served by transit and existing infrastructure. The former use was a three-family dwelling. As such, the mixed-use building will provide a net increase of one residential unit and new office space.
3. The development will include 5 surface parking spaces for cars, including the installation of an EV charger, and 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces and 8 long-term bicycle parking spaces located within the building. The new building and use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.
4. The new building and use will not overload any municipal systems. The addition of permeable pavers for the parking lot, a catch basin, and a trench drain across the driveway will facilitate the collection of stormwater prior to it flowing into Massachusetts Avenue.
5. All special regulations applicable to the use are fulfilled.
6. The use does not impair the integrity or character of the neighborhood. The mixed-use building is in keeping with adjacent land uses, particularly along Massachusetts Avenue. New residential units will not impair the integrity or character of the district or the adjoining districts and it will not be detrimental to health or welfare. The building is consistent with the Design Standards for the Town of Arlington.
7. The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood.

**The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.4.4, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:**

**1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape**

Following the demolition of the structure previously located on the site, the vegetation on the lot was also removed. The development will introduce new landscaping materials and will be regraded which is in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.

The applicant continues to work with the Tree Warden to be in compliance with the Tree Protection and Preservation Bylaw (Title V, Article 16) due to the removal of trees from the property. The site is also sloped, so a retaining wall will be constructed to create open

space at the rear of the site where eleven new trees and vegetation will be planted. The applicant will work with the Tree Warden to select the type and caliper of trees to be planted.

Additional landscaping will be installed along the sidewalk and western property line to create an inviting streetscape at the office spaces.

**2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment**

The building design relates to the neighborhood and vicinity. Neighboring structures include a one-story building with a restaurant and a 12-unit multifamily apartment building on the 1500 block of Massachusetts Avenue and one- and two-family buildings across Massachusetts Avenue. The building height will not shadow abutting properties in the R1 residential district. This is primarily because of the grade change between those properties and the proposed new building. Additionally, the former structure on the site was close in height to the new building.

**3. EDR-3 Open Space**

By bringing the building closer to the street, a large area of usable open space will be provided at the rear of the building. The use of a retaining wall ensures that this space is generally flat and open to the sky per the Zoning Bylaw. The ARB determined that adjusting the front yard setback to 2.5 feet as allowed by Section 5.3.16 in order to provide this area of usable open space and to facilitate tree planting in accordance with the Tree Protection and Preservation Bylaw is an improvement to the site and the future occupants of the site.

Landscaped open space is located throughout the property. A buffer of at least 5 feet is provided along the rear property line. Additional landscaped open space and a walkway to access the usable open space at the rear of the property is provided along the western side property line.

**4. EDR-4 Circulation**

The applicant sought a parking reduction through Section 6.1.5 and submitted a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan accordingly. The ARB granted this request of no fewer than 5 parking spaces and compliance with the TDM Plan.

The office space, totaling 873.5 square feet, would require two parking spaces. However, in mixed-use developments, the first 3,000 square feet of non-residential space is exempt from parking requirements. The residential use includes four, two-bedroom residential units. Each two-bedroom unit is required to have 1.5 vehicle parking spaces per unit for a total of 6 parking spaces required. Five vehicle parking spaces are provided. Each residential unit will be assigned one space, and the fifth parking space will be available to an office tenant and provide overflow parking for residential guests.

An EV charger is also provided. Assigning parking spaces and providing an EV charger are two elements of the TDM Plan, which also includes providing covered bicycle parking and

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storage and providing a shower in the shared restroom for the office tenants. Related to bicycle parking, 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces are provided along the sidewalk. The building overhand provides some protection of these bicycle racks from weather. Additionally, 8 long-term bicycle parking spaces are provided in a bicycle storage room on the first floor of the building.

Access to the site is through a two-way driveway on the eastern property line. Four of the parking spaces are for full-sized vehicles and one parking space is designed for compact vehicles to facilitate access to this parking space.

**5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage**

The parking area will be paved with permeable pavers, which will contribute to the control of stormwater management on the site. The addition of a catch basin within the parking area and a trench drain across the driveway will capture sheet flow before it flows into Massachusetts Avenue. This is an improvement over the existing condition where there are no controls for stormwater.

**6. EDR-6 Utilities Service**

There will be no any changes to utility service.

**7. EDR-7 Advertising Features**

The project includes signage that is compliant with the requirements of signage in the B1 Neighborhood Office District. The signage will require additional approval once a tenant is selected

**8. EDR-8 Special Features**

All special features are contained within the building.

**9. EDR-9 Safety**

The new building conforms to all code requirements for open and enclosed spaces. The building design and features will increase safety.

**10. EDR-10 Heritage**

The former three-family dwelling which was located on this property and demolished was not listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington* and is not under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission. None of the adjacent properties are listed on the Inventory.

**11. EDR-11 Microclimate**

There will be no adverse impacts on air and water resources or on temperature levels of the immediate environment.

**12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design**

The building will include sustainability and performance features that will enhance energy and atmosphere and indoor environmental quality.

**The project must adhere to the following general conditions:**

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1. The final design, sign, exterior material, landscaping, and lighting plans shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board or administratively approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
  2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.
  3. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
  4. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with the Town Bylaws.
  5. The owner shall provide a statement from the Town Engineer that all proposed utility services have adequate capacity to serve the development.
  6. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the owner shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
  7. All utilities serving or traversing the site (including electric, telephone, cable, and other such lines and equipment) shall be underground.
  8. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Applicant shall file with the Inspectional Services Department and the Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.

**The project must adhere to the following special conditions:**

1. Any final building signage will be reviewed and approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development and Inspectional Services or Arlington Redevelopment Board, as applicable.
2. The Final Transportation Demand Management Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
3. The Applicant is required to comply with all requirements of the Tree Protection and Preservation Bylaw and as required by the Tree Warden.

4. The ARB adjusted the required front yard setback from 20 feet to 2.5 feet in accordance with Section 5.3.16 due to conditions unique to the proposal.
5. The ARB reduced the required parking spaces from 6 to 5, pursuant to Section 6.1.5 and the Transportation Demand Management Plan.

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